

[Networking Novice? Try Some of These 19 Networking Questions](#)

Posted by [Cordell Parvin](#) on June 30, 2011

[Anne Marie O'Brien](#) is a [Lamson Dugan and Murray](#) partner I coached over this last year. Every quarter I met with her group in Omaha and we ate dinner together. Each time, Anne Marie asked her colleagues and me great questions that got the conversation going. The last time, we were together she asked:

What was your best trial experience? What was your worst trial experience?

She then listened as each of her colleagues answered.

Anne Marie has a gift and is able to engage people by asking questions. As you likely know, I don't have the same gift. Networking was never my thing. I enjoyed writing and speaking. I only enjoyed networking after I gave a presentation at an event because then people came up to me with questions.

Because I never enjoyed networking, I decided several times in my career to simply practice. I read books and articles by networking experts and came up with some networking questions for events attended by business men and women. Here are my questions:

Networking Questions

1. How did you get started in _____?
2. What made you decide to go into the ___ business?
3. What do you love/enjoy most about what you do?
4. Tell me about your company.
5. What separates your company from the competition?
6. What changes are happening in your industry?
7. How is the current economy impacting your business?
8. Depending on the answer: Do you see things turning around for you?
9. What do you see happening in your industry over the next few years?
10. What are some of the projects you are currently working on?
11. What ways does your company promote/market its products/services?
12. Does your company use social media in its marketing efforts?
13. What do you like to do in your spare time?
14. Tell me about your family.
15. What do your children enjoy doing?
16. Where are you from originally?
17. How long have you lived here?



18. What do you enjoy the most about living in _____?
19. What can I do to help you? What can I do to help your business?

What questions would you add to this list?

If you are like me and need more help on networking, here are some books on my reading list:

[How to Work a Room, Revised Edition: Your Essential Guide to Savvy Socializing](#) by [Susan RoAne](#)

[How to Talk to Anyone: 92 Little Tricks for Big Success in Relationships](#) by [Leil Lowndes](#)

[How to Connect in Business in 90 Seconds or Less](#) by [Nicholas Boothman](#)

Cordell M. Parvin built a national construction practice during his 35 years practicing law. At *Jenkins & Gilchrist*, Mr. Parvin was the Construction Law Practice Group Leader and was also responsible for the firm's attorney development practice. While there he taught client development and created a coaching program for junior partners. In 2005, Mr. Parvin left the firm and started Cordell Parvin LLC. He now works with lawyers and law firms on career development and planning and client development. He is the co-author of *Say Ciao to Chow Mein: Conquering Career Burnout* and other books for lawyers. To learn more visit his Web site, www.cordellparvin.com or contact him at cparvin@cordellparvin.com.